

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4743

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 6869

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CG

SUBJECT: NEW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: CAUTIOUS MOVE TOWARD INCREASED
COMPETENCE AND DECENTRALIZATION

REF: A) KINSHASA 6428; B) KINSHASA 1631

1. SUMMARY: THE ALTERATION OF THE COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ANNOUNCED BY MOBUTU ON JULY 8 APPEARS TO CONTINUE THE TREND TOWARD GREATER TECHNICAL COMPETENCE AND DECENTRALIZATION EVIDENT IN THE PREVIOUS RESHUFFLE/REORGANIZATION OF LAST FEBRUARY. HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT SO FAR SEEMS INTENT ON KEEPING THE NEW FIRST COMMISSIONER ON A VERY SHORT LEASH. END SUMMARY.

2. FIFTEEN MEMBERS OF THE OLD EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAVE BEEN RETAINED. MOST SIGNIFICANT AMONG THOSE IS NGUZA KARL I BOND, WHO STAYS ON AS FOREIGN MINISTER. NGUZA HAS DONE A BRILLIANT JOB IN IMPLEMENTING MOBUTU'S DIPLOMATIC STRATEGIES, PARTICULARLY IN STRENGTHENING ZAIRE'S IMAGE AND RELATIONS WITH WESTERN DONOR/CREDITOR COUNTRIES AND IN MARSHALING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT DURING THE SHABA INVASION. NGUZA'S RETENTION AS FOREIGN MINISTER SHOULD SERVE WESTERN INTERESTS WELL--PROBABLY EVEN BETTER THAN IF NGUZA HAD BEEN MOVED UP TO FIRST COMMISSIONER (PRIME MINISTER) IN VIEW OF
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MOBUTU'S APPARENT RELUCTANCE TO DELEGATE BROAD POWERS
TO WHOMEVER OCCUPIES THAT POSITION.

3. OTHER HOLDOVERS WORTH NOTING ARE COMMISSIONER OF FINANCE BOFOSSA AND COMMISSIONER OF NATIONAL ECONOMY NYEMBO. BOFOSSA, WHO HAS A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH BANK OF ZAIHE GOVERNOR SAMBWA (WHO ALSO REMAINS), CONTINUES TO COMBINE IMPRESSIVE

PERFORMANCE DURING INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL NEGOTIATIONS, SUCH AS THE PARIS CLUB AND CONSULTATIVE GROUP, WITH TIMID, INEFFECTUAL ADMINISTRATION OF HIS DEPARTMENT. NYEMBO, WHO HAS ONLY BEEN ON BOARD SINCE LAST FEBRUARY, IS CONVINCED THAT PAST NEGLECT OF ZAIRE'S RURAL SECTOR MUST BE REMEDIED, AND HAS BEEN WORKING TO INCREASE THE IMPACT ON ECONOMIC POLICY OF HIS HISTORICALLY WEAK DEPARTMENT. BOTH BOFOSSA AND NYEMBO HAVE BEEN FRIENDLY AND COOPERATIVE WITH MEMBERS OF THE MISSION.

4. SEVERAL OF THE NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ARE EXPECTED TO STRENGTHEN THAT BODY. TEPATONDELE, THE NEW COMMISSIONER FOR AGRICULTURE, IS WELL KNOWN TO MISSION OFFICERS. HE HAS WORKED CLOSELY AND COOPERATIVELY WITH THE MISSION IN HIS PREVIOUS POSITION AS DELEGUE GENERAL OF ONACER. HE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE AN IMPROVEMENT OVER HIS PREDECESSOR, BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER HE HAS THE STATURE, EXECUTIVE ABILITIES AND SELF CONFIDENCE TO PROVIDE THE DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP WHICH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS LACKED FOR NUMEROUS YEARS. MULUMBA, PROMOTED FROM DIRECTOR GENERAL TO COMMISSIONER OF PLANNING, IS WIDELY RESPECTED FOR HIS HONESTY AND COMPETENCE. HE HAS BEEN NOTABLY COOPERATIVE WITH AID AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE MISSION. HE HAS EFFECTIVELY USED THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS TO FOCUS GOVERNMENT ATTENTION ON THE NEED FOR A COORDINATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

5. ASSUMANI, HEAD OF THE NEWLY-CREATED DEPARTMENT OF RURAL
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DEVELOPMENT, HAS AN IMPRESSIVE RECORD AS REGIONAL COMMISSIONER AND CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE WITH PRACTICAL PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL. HE REPORTEDLY IS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN ALLEVIATING RURAL POVERTY, AND APPEARS TO BE AN EXCELLENT CHOICE. GIVEN HIS DEMONSTRATED ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL SKILLS, HE MAY PROVE TO BE THE STRONGEST OF THE NEW APPOINTEES. AS COMMISSIONER FOR SHABA AT THE TIME OF THE RECENT INVASION, ASSUMANI WAS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH MOBUTU DURING THE LATTER'S PROLONGED STAY IN THE REGION. HOW ASSUMANI WILL INTERACT WITH MULUMBA AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING REMAINS TO BE SEEN. THE CREATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ASSUMANI'S APPOINTMENT ARE VIEWED BY SOME SKEPTICS AS PART OF A DELIBERATE EFFORT BY MOBUTU TO LIMIT THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF MULUMBA'S PLANNING DEPARTMENT, WHICH HAS BEEN MOST PRONOUNCED IN THE REALM OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND THUS TO CHECK PRESSURES COMING FROM THAT DEPARTMENT WHICH WOULD CRAMP THE PRESIDENT'S CURRENT STYLE OF SPENDING. A SOURCE CLOSE TO BOTH ASSUMANI AND MULUMBA, HOWEVER, BELIEVES THAT THE TWO WILL WORK WELL TOGETHER.

6. TWO OTHER APPOINTMENTS OF INTEREST ARE THOSE OF MUSHOBKWA, AS COMMISSIONER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS, AND MOKOLO, AS COMMISSIONER FOR NATIONAL ORIENTATION. WE HAD CONSIDERABLE CONTACT

WITH MUSHOBOKWA IN HIS FORMER CAPACITY AS DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. IN GENERAL, HE IMPRESSED US FAVORABLY AS A COOPERATIVE AND CAPABLE DIPLOMAT AMENABLE TO WESTERN INTERESTS. HIS DETRACTORS, ON THE OTHER HAND, DESCRIBE HIM AS AN ADROIT AND AMBITIOUS GAMESMAN WITH LITTLE INTEREST IN WORKING TO ACQUIRE MORE THAN A SUPERFICIAL GRASP OF HIS AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY. HIS NEW POSITION WILL BE A DIFFICULT ONE, FOR HE WILL HAVE TO COPE WITH THE THORNY PROBLEMS OF DEBT-RIDDEN AIR ZAIRE AND THE COUNTRY'S DETERIORATING RIVER AND RAIL TRANSPORT SYSTEM.

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7. MOKOLO WAS FORMERLY HEAD OF THE EXTERNAL BRANCH OF ZAIRE'S SECURITY SERVICE (CND) AND, MOST RECENTLY, AMBASSADOR TO IVORY COAST. WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE US, HE HAS BEEN IMPRESSIVE IN THE PAST BOTH IN HIS INTELLIGENCE AND HIS LACK OF CONCERN FOR ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS. IN LIGHT OF HIS ENDURING ENMITY TOWARD FORMER PRESIDENCY DIRECTOR BISENGIMANA, WHO HE REPORTEDLY HAS CHARACTERIZED AS THE "RWANDAN BANDIT" RESPONSIBLE FOR ZAIRE'S DESPERATE ECONOMIC STRAITS, MODOLO'S APPOINTMENT WILL BE INTERPRETED BY SOME AS A FURTHER SETBACK FOR THE LATTER. HOWEVER, IF CURRENT RUMORS PROVE ACCURATE RE THE IMPENDING APPOINTMENT OR KENGO WA DONDO, ATTORNEY GENERAL AND PROMINENT ENEMY OF BISENGIMANA, TO THE DISMAL POST OF AMBASSADOR TO INDIA, MOKOLO'S APPOINTMENT WILL APPEAR INSTEAD TO HAVE BEEN A CLEVER OFF-SETTING GESTURE ON MOBUTU'S PART.

8. AT LEAST ONE APPOINTMENT, THAT OF KOLI ELOMBE AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, IS DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE WITH MOBUTU'S ATTEMPT TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF REFORM. DURING HIS EARLIER CAREER AS VICE-RECTOR OF THE LUBUMBASHI CAMPUS OF ZAIRE'S NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, KOLI

ESTABLISHED A SOLID REPUTATION AS AN INSTIABLE GRAFTER. HE WILL NOW, IN TANDEM WITH KASUSULA DJAMA, HIS NEW COMMISSIONER OF APPARENTLY DUBIOUS REPUTE, BE CHARGED WITH CLEANING UP CORRUPTION IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION.
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9. IN ADDITION TO THE DESIGNATION OF A FIRST COMMISSIONER (REF A). THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF DECENTRALIZATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IS MOBUTU'S RELINQUISHMENT OF THE PLANNING PORTFOLIO IN FAVOR OF MULUMBA. AS DISCUSSED REF B, A MAJOR GOAL OF THE REFORM FACTION WITHIN THE REGIME HAS BEEN THE REMOVAL OF THE PLANNING FUNCTION FROM THE PRESIDENCY. SOME OBSERVERS ARE NOW CLAIMING THAT THIS SHIFT IN FACT IS MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN THE NAMING OF A FIRST COMMISSIONER, AND THEY POINT TO THE LOW PROVILE MAIN-TAINED THUS FAR BY FIRST COMMISSIONER MPINGA TO SUPPORT THEIR AGRUMENT. ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE SOURCE WHO MET WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE PRESIDENCY ON JULY 16, NIMY EMPHATICALLY REJECTED THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE FIRST COMMISSIONER MIGHT ASSUME EVEN A MODEST DEGREE OF DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY. ASSERTING THAT HE REFLECTED THE PRESIDENT'S VIEWS, NIMY REPORTEDLY INSISTED THAT MPINGA'S ROLE WOULD BE LIMITED TO COORDINATION. TO INSURE THAT HE NOT OVERSTEP HIS BOUNDS, MPINGA WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO RECRUIT HIS OWN TEAM OF ADVISERS TO AID HIM AS QUASI-CABINET IN MONITORING THE BUSINESS OF THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS. IN CONTRAST WITH THE RECENT MILITARY REORGANIZATION, WHICH EMPHASIZES MOBUTU'S DIRECT CONTROL BUT ALSO APPEARS TO DEVOLVE CONSIDERABLE AUTHORITY TO HIS DEPUTY, GENERAL BABIA, MOBUTU THUS FAR SEEMS UNWILLING TO DELEGATE SIMILAR AUTHORITY IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE. AS A RESULT, HE RISKS FOREGOING SOME OF THE INCREASED ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY AND POLITICAL CREDIBILITY WHICH HIS NOMINATION OF A FIRST COMMISSIONER MIGHT OTHERWISE PRODUCE.
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